



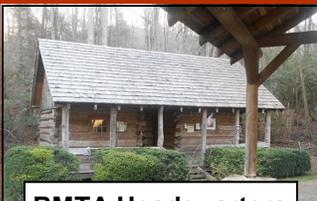
### Points of Interest

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 State Rep TN: Rick Harris  
 State Rep NC: **Vacant**

Suspension Bridge over the Toccoa River:  
 By Ralph Heller



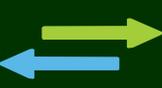
BMTA Headquarters



VOLUME 30, ISSUE 4

APRIL 27, 2013

# Blue Ridge Georgia ... BMTA Trail Town ...



By Ralph Heller

It's official! On Saturday, **April 13** Blue Ridge officially became a BMTA/SEFTC Trail Town. David Blount talked about the benefits of Blue Ridge becoming a trail town and presented the Trail Town sign to Rhonda Thomas who represented Donna Whitener the Mayor of Blue Ridge. George Owen told the audience about how



excited the SEFTC was for the town to be given this designation. I would like to thank Marty and Dan Kaufman and Jane Olds for helping with the raffle. Also, thanks to Zoe Zardis, Gene Nix, Vic Fredlund, Mark Yost and Jim Holland for doing the chainsaw/crosscut demonstrations. Dick and Margaret Evans handled our very successful merchandise sales. Kudos to Walter Polk for helping set up on **Friday** and for his pictures of the event and Marge Heller for helping organize and for publicity. Also thanks to Trout Unlimited, North Georgia Back Country Horsemen, SORBA, and Save Georgia's Hemlocks for participating.



George Owen reports that at least one trail town sign has been installed. It is located at old Highway 5 coming into town might at the Aska Road turn right below the Blue Ridge City Limits sign and "it really looks good."

This was a great start for what will be an annual event.

# Benton MacKaye's Trail Town Photos



# Easy Trek Hike to Fall Branch Falls ...

By Sara Bland

Photos By Al Cash

On a glorious [April 13](#) morning, Easy Trekkers met at Mercier's in Blue Ridge to enjoy the festivities and ceremony to designate Blue Ridge as a BMTA Trail Town. This vivacious group of 18 was composed of Al and Martha Cash (new members), Walter Polk, Linda Hinson, Noor Moody, Carole Semenchuk, Nancy Mulcahy, Joy and Frank Forehand, Doug Seeb and son, Ryan Seeb (new members), Odie Futral and Roy Bennett, Mary and Don Bray, Wendy Knowles, and Sara and Jerry Bland (hike leader and sweep respectively).



At about 10:30, we departed Mercier's and travelled to Fall Branch Falls area. We started the 3.5 mile loop hike from a parking area about 1/2 mile past the falls parking lot. As we travelled up the mountain, we spotted the beginnings of spring flora and fauna, e.g. dwarf irises and trillium. After a gentle climb, we began our descent to the falls where the signs appear. This most congenial and hungry-by-now group stopped near the falls for a leisurely lunch and a "little" chatting. Afterward, we continued and took another short break to gaze upon and take pictures of the ever-

amazing falls. The last "leg" of the hike was across the road on a defined trail through Forest Service land alongside the rushing Stanley Creek. A little more road hiking took us to the parking area where we started and where we all agreed that it was another great day to be together in the woods.



## Wednesday, May 8 ... Easy Trek Hike ... Amicalola River Trail on Georgia 53, Dawson County, GA

This is an exceptional 3-mile loop hike with a variety of features ...

- Hike begins on Boardwalk developed by Mountain Stewards as a Handicap Access trail (alongside the river).
- Edge of The World Class IV Rapids (created by the Brevard Fault Line) about 1/2 mile downstream.
- Walk out on boulders in the river. Good snacking place.
- Interpretive Signs along the way explaining interesting points.
- Highpoint on ridge has picnic table and trail dedication sign to Jason Funk, an Eagle Scout from Cumming who developed the trail. He died at 16 years old.



After hike, optional lunch will be at the Fuego Grill and Tequila Bar across the street from the North Gate of Big Canoe.

We will meet at Food Lion in Ellijay at 8:45 to carpool to starting point.

**Call Sara Bland for details and/or to sign up at 770-366-6053 - Cell.**

## Saturday, May 18 ... Easy Trek Hike ... Toccoa River Suspension Bridge ...

- A beautiful drive on Highway 60 to Benton-MacKay Trailhead
- One-way 3-mile hike through the woods in the Chattahoochie National Forest
- Destination is a 260 feet pedestrian bridge spanning the beautiful Toccoa River.
- This bridge was constructed in 1977 by USDA Forest Service and the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club.
- Snack and/or lunch break in the meadow by the river.



For those of you who have not done this hike, it is a must-do hike.

We will meet at Ingle's in Blue Ridge at 8:30 AM.

**Call Sara Bland for details and/or to sign up at 770-366-6053 - Cell.**

# AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY'S NATIONAL TRAILS DAY®

JUNE 1, 2013

By Pam Sullivan

This year, GATC, BMTA, and MHH will have a joint celebration of National Trails Day at Vogel State Park on the first of June. The clubs have reserved Pavilion #2 on the lake and are contributing drinks, ice and tableware for a noon picnic. The clubs will all have displays. Festivities will begin in the morning and include a work detail in the park, two hikes, and a pot-luck picnic.

The work trip will be led by Don Hicks, Trail Coordinator of GATC, and tools will be provided. You need to bring gloves, wear sturdy shoes, and bring your own first aid kit, etc, for working. **Work trip departs from out pavilion at 9 AM.**

**George Owen will lead a hike into the Coosa Backcountry which will DEPART from our pavilion at 9 AM.** Hike the Coosa Backcountry about a mile to the 180 Rd. gap, then walk up the road a short distance to an old back way into the Bear Hair Trail...up that to the Vogel overlook, then back down over toward Wolf Creek and around - about 5+ miles, moderate hike at a moderate pace.

Picnic lunch will begin at 12 noon. Please bring a dish to share with the group. **Tables and seating may be in short supply so please bring a lawn chair for seating!**

Optional 2 mile hike after lunch around lake and up the nature trail.

**Hikers are allowed to bring a guest.** Feel free to bring a non-motorized boat, swimsuit and pool toys to cool off in lake. Pedal boats and mini golf are available for an additional fee.

We look forward to this American Hiking Society backed outing of three of the foremost trail clubs in the north Georgia region. So bring a dish to share, hiking/ play toys and a lawn chair. See you there!!!

**Fee area: Park pass or fee required for entrance to park**



Georgia Appalachian Trail Club



Benton Mackaye Trail Association



Mountain High Hikers

## May 18, 2013 - Monthly BMTA TN/NC Work Trip - Big Frog Wilderness

### Tennessee Work Trip – May 18 – Big Frog Mountain

Please note that this trip will be held on the third Saturday in May to avoid conflicts with the Memorial Day Weekend. We will meet at Thunder Rock Campground off Highway 64 in the Ocoee Gorge at 8:00 a.m. We will be brushing out the trail and clearing blowdowns. We need 2 or more certified crosscut sawyers as we will be in Wilderness. This trip is not for the faint of heart. Due to the remoteness of Big Frog Mountain, we will be walking in 6.5 miles to reach the mountain top. Work will commence about 4 miles in and if we get a good turnout we will work the other side (south side) of the summit a mile or so to clear any blowdowns. This is a great opportunity to see this pristine wilderness section in the safety of a group setting. Georgia members are strongly urged to travel this short distance into Tennessee and help our neighbors to the north clear this section. A good turnout will make the work of the day much more manageable and the hike in and out more enjoyable. Please make your plans to attend.

It is important to contact the trip leaders in advance if you plan to attend so that we know our available resources ahead of time.

**Trip leader: Ernie Engman, email [sgtrock @ hikinghq.net](mailto:sgtrock@hikinghq.net), phone 865-924-5992**

**Co-leader: David Blount, email [bmtahiker @ aol.com](mailto:bmtahiker@aol.com)**



## May 11, 2013 - Monthly GA BMTA Work-Trip Springer Mountain to Big Stamp Gap

May 11 – GA Worktrip: We will work on replacing and improving water diversions on historic section 1a – Springer Mountain to Big Stamp Gap. We will meet at the official AT parking area near Springer Mtn. on FS 42, then consolidate to as few vehicles as possible and drive down to Big Stamp Gap which is closer to the main work area. Trip Leader: Tom Keene, (cell) 770-548-4935 To minimize driving, breakfast meetings at two places, both beginning at 8:00AM and departing for a one hour drive to the trailhead at 8:30 sharp:

For those coming from Atlanta and other points south: meet at the Hardee's in East Ellijay. (It's on the left at the light just before you cross the river northbound on 515/76.) Tom Keene, coordinating – (cell) 770-548-4935.

For those coming from Blue Ridge and points north: meet at the Village Restaurant in Blue Ridge. George Owen, coordinating – (cell) 706-897-3366

Again, both breakfasts beginning at 8:00AM and departing at 8:30 sharp for a one hour drive to the trailhead.

But that's not all.....

As a special incentive (and reward,) following the day's work we will reconvene at the Pavilion at Mountain Meadows for hot dogs, hamburgers, some sides and cold sodas. The Pavilion is at the corner of East New Hope Road and Possum Poke Road, a couple miles off of Double Head Gap Road south of the Gap.

**Please contact David Blount by email [bmtahiker @ aol.com](mailto:bmtahiker@aol.com) if you plan to attend the cook-out so that sufficient planning can take place. Make your plans now to see and work on Section 1a and follow it up with some food and fellowship!**

# John Muir Trail Reconstruction ...June 1st

This message is from Steve Biatowas, Ocoee-Hiwassee Trails Tech with the USFS, Cherokee National Forest. Please consider participating and put this on your calendar now:

Efforts are underway to repair and revitalize the John Muir Trail. This trail is a National Recreation Trail and it has a direct historic connection to the famous naturalist, John Muir.

Workers are being recruited who are willing to do reconstruction work, basically use of pulaskis to dig and rakes to level and smooth tread. We also need a cadre of experienced trail construction leaders to help provide guidance for new volunteers. Truly, it will be very hard to be successful without experienced trail maintainers to provide support to new maintenance crewmembers.

## Please contact

Jeff Hunter  
423-322-7866  
[jeff@wildsouth.org](mailto:jeff@wildsouth.org)

Or

Steve Biatowas  
[sbiatowas@fs.fed.us](mailto:sbiatowas@fs.fed.us)  
423-338-3328



Date: **June 1<sup>st</sup>**

Time: 9:00 am

Section of work: John Muir Trail #152 Coker Creek to Hwy 68

Meeting Place:

For anyone coming from Chattanooga/Cleveland, meet at the Ocoee/Hiwassee District Office @ 0800

From Tellico Plains/Ductown, meet directly at the camping area where John Muir intersects the Coker Creek trail (bottom of Duckett Ridge Road) @ 0900.

## New Burns on Georgia BMT...Late April-May

### New Burns on Georgia BMT - Late April, May

The U.S. Forest Service has recently completed a controlled burn from the Benton MacKaye Trail southward east of Wilscot Gap.

Now a new controlled burn, one of at least two planned, is expected any day between Wilscot Gap westward over Brawley Mountain to Garland Gap from the BMT southward. Hikers should be on notice that their hikes could be delayed or even canceled for a brief time through this area in the weeks ahead. For further information if planning to hike this area soon, contact the Forest Service at 706-745-6928.

### Put This On Your Calendar...



**BMTA Annual Meeting ...  
November 2,**

November 2013						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

### "Safety Equipment Match" by Dick Evans

As many of you know, members of my family had the privilege to actually know Benton MacKaye during his lifetime. In particular, my Aunt, Ida Arnold, went on several "tromps" with him in the Shirley, Mass, area, and she gladly shared her experiences, as well as giving me a copy of his book, *Expedition Nine-Return to a Region* that he endorsed to her. Aunt Ida passed away earlier this month at the age of 95. In her memory, I wanted to make a donation to the Association, and at the same time, Tom Keene mentioned that we need some more hard hats and other safety equipment, so I would like to make the following challenge to the Members and friends of the BMTA. From now thru the end of May, I will match dollar for dollar, up to \$250, any donations to the Association with the funds being used to increase of supply of safety equipment. You can make a donation thru the web page or by just sending a check to the Cherrylog address, so double your money and help the BMTA get some needed equipment at the same time.

The **Noland Creek section of the Benton MacKaye Trail in the Great Smokies National Park** will be closed to all foot and horse traffic thru **May 2nd**, 2013, from the parking area on Lakeview Drive (Road to Nowhere) to Campsite 64. This closure will make a thru-hike on that that section during that time frame impossible, and there is no good alternate. Best suggestion if you are contemplating such a hike then, look at the Park Trail Map for other trail choices.

There was a landslide in the area, and the closure is necessary to repair the damage.

## May 3-5 (Friday-Sunday)

### Rainbow Springs Car Camping and Dayhikes

Leader: Bob Ruby

Co-leader: Stacy Bredendieck

BMTA members are invited to participate with GATC for this car camping and hiking weekend at the former Rainbow Springs Campground. GATC member Stacy Bredendieck and her friend, Greg, purchased this formerly commercial Campground near Standing Indian for private use. It has all the amenities of the USFS Appletree Group Campground and more! The 10-acre property is located near US 64 between Franklin and Hayesville, NC, off the road to the USFS Standing Indian Campground. It has a large pavilion with a stone fireplace overlooking a grassy camping area sloping down to the Upper Nantahala River. They also have several hookups for camper vehicles. The bathhouse has flush toilets and hot water for showers and sinks. All this luxury and at no fee!



The A.T. passes within a mile. We'll plan a variety of day hikes of 5-10 miles in length for Friday afternoon, **Saturday**, and **Sunday** morning on the A.T., Chunky Gal, and other trails in the nearby Standing Indian Mountain complex. Wildflowers should be near their peak. We'll have coordinated pot-luck dinners on **Friday & Saturday** evenings for those who wish to participate. There is plenty of room, so let us know if you want to bring family or friends to join the activities or to just hang out and relax at camp or in the area.

To register, contact Bob Ruby at [bmtabob@gmail.com](mailto:bmtabob@gmail.com) (404-252-8888)

or

Stacy Bredendieck at [stacyantje@yahoo.com](mailto:stacyantje@yahoo.com).

## Spring Wildflowers Abound ...

Connor and Steve Bayliss have been seeing quite a few of these throughout Section 8. Both Susan Caster and Ralph Heller tell us that this is the Bloodroot flower, one of the earliest blooming spring wildflowers. The plant contains compound sanguinarine that inhibits plaque formation on teeth. Indians used the plant to dye their skin red, and to color clothing and mats. The acrid powder of the dried root was used for numerous medicinal purposes, including treatment for snakebite. Bloodroot is poisonous if taken in large doses. This bit of information came from the book, *All About Georgia Wildflowers*, by Jan W. Midgley.



Have any pictures from your hikes? We'd love to publish them in the Newsletter. Send them to... [editor@bmta.org](mailto:editor@bmta.org).

## Leaving a Foot Path ...

John and James Nix recently returned from a hiking adventure in Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks. The brothers are both avid hikers and enjoyed the distinct difference between this area and the Appalachian Mountains. Several days were spent camping and hiking in Zion and Bryce Canyon. Both boys were able to hike the Archeology, Watchman, Emerald Springs, Queens, and Navajo Trails. They



also hiked on the famous Angels Landing Trail, which snakes up a rock formation measuring 1488 feet, but only John was able to reach the grueling summit. James decided to wait a few years before he tried again. Both boys are members of the Benton MacKaye's Trail Association and help their father Gene Nix maintain two sections of the trail.

# Aska Lodge Bed and Breakfast ... WE LOVE OUR BMT HIKERS! ...

**At the Aska Lodge B&B in Blue Ridge, WE LOVE OUR BMT HIKERS!**

We just had this group here, that's Innkeeper Bob on the right as he heads out to take them back to the trail. We usually pick them up out on the highway where the trail crosses it, take them to town to do laundry/resupply/eat, then bring them back to the lodge to spoil them just a little before they head back out. We always try and fill their pockets with cookies from our bottomless cookie jar...very few decline.

**This morning** it was Creme Brulee French Toast with fresh fruit and bacon or turkey sausage...there wasn't a crumb left. Last year we had a couple

come all the way from North Dakota to hike the BMT; they ended up staying 3 days because of rain and were the most delightful couple ever! Our hikers are always so interesting and have the best stories to share...it's one of the best parts about being an innkeeper!



Mary Jo Stamper, Owner/Innkeeper, Aska Lodge B&B, Blue Ridge, Georgia

ASKA LODGE B&B, LLC  
178 Calen Dr., Blue Ridge, GA 30513  
706-632-0178  
[www.askalodge.net](http://www.askalodge.net)  
email: [askme@askalodge.net](mailto:askme@askalodge.net)



## BMTA Welcomes New Members...

By Vic Fredlund

- |                      |                  |     |
|----------------------|------------------|-----|
| • Frank Sup III      | Ellijay, GA      | Feb |
| • Robert Sloan       | Canton, GA       | Feb |
| • Arthur Meyer       | Ellijay, GA      | Feb |
| • Michael Trafton    | Concord, NC      | Mar |
| • Mike McCrary       | Molena, GA       | Mar |
| • Bill Click         | Ellijay, GA      | Mar |
| • Benjamin McCloskey | Ball Ground, GA  | Mar |
| • William Tally      | Douglasville, GA | Mar |
| • Michael Sutton     | Waleska, GA      | Mar |
| • Paul Brame         | Glastonbury, CT  | Mar |
| • David Wessell      | Blue Ridge, GA   | Mar |
| • Douglas Seeb       | Norcross, GA     | Mar |

### **BMTA: Work Trip Announcement - May 4th, 2013**

Come join us in the bridge relocation project off the Cherohala Skyway near the Tennessee/North Carolina State Line. Meet at the Unicoi Overlook Parking Lot (just east of the state line) at 10 AM on [Saturday, May 4th](#). Bring personal protective gear and Pulaskis and loppers. As a special inducement, we will have a hot dog lunch with Iced Tea on site. We will be digging in the footings for the bridge, as well as the tread for the relocated trail. If things work out, we may be able to rig and move the bridge that afternoon.

Please let Dick Evans know if you can make it. Contact "dick.evans (at) frontier.com" so we know how many hot dogs to buy!

Dick Evans